

A Response to Seth Millstein's "How to argue Pro-Choice: 11 Arguments Against Abortion
Access, Debunked

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In an article titled “How to Argue Pro-Choice: 11 Arguments Against Abortion Access, Debunked,” Seth Millstein attempts to defend the practice of abortion and the value that many people place on the abortion industry as a tool for empowering women and ultimately society itself.

Millstein sets forth 11 arguments that he says pro-life people use to defend life, and he formulates a response for each.

In this paper, I will address each of Millstein’s responses from the stance of reason (accessing nature and discovering clues about life).

Of course, I hope that these arguments will appeal to Christians who believe in the Bible and confess that God made the universe. Hopefully, Christians will be encouraged in the faith and convinced to affirm life from conception to natural death.

In our world, though, we must be able to convince people who do not trust the Bible. Even some people who call themselves Christians deny the revelation of Jesus and as such come to differing conclusions about the value of life. We must argue from reason in order to influence and change our culture of death. If we are unable or unwilling to do this, we hand our nation and its laws and culture over to those who persuade our culture to believe the lies and false reason.

Maybe, through reason, doors for proclaiming the Revelation of Jesus might open. Ultimately, only Jesus can change the death that reigns in the human heart.

Romans 1:18-23

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Common Argument = Argument attributed to pro-life or antiabortion proponents.
Your Response = Seth Millstein’s pro-abortion response to the “common argument.”

Common Argument #1: A fetus is a human being, and human beings have the right to life, so abortion is murder.

Your Response: I'm probably not going to convince you that a fetus isn't a life, as that's basically the most intractable part of this whole debate, so I'll be brief.

A fetus can't survive on its own. It is fully dependent on its mother's body, unlike born human beings. Even if a fetus was alive, the "right to life" doesn't imply a right to use somebody else's body. People have the right to refuse to donate their organs, for example, even if doing so would save somebody else's life. The "right to life" also doesn't imply a right to live by threatening somebody else's life. Bearing children is always a threat to the life of the mother. A "right to life" is, at the end of the day, a right to not have somebody else's will imposed upon your body. Do women not have this right as well?

The fact that Millstein calls the argument that a fetus is a human being “intractable” demonstrates a strategy that pro-abortion people have started to employ just recently. Many scientific developments, especially in imaging, have diminished the ability of pro-abortion people to deny that the fetus is, in fact, a human being. When viewing a 4d image of a baby in utero, it becomes challenging and overly cumbersome to deny that there is no real difference between that baby in the womb and that baby born. Most pro-abortion people have given up on the argument. Instead of arguing the humanity of the baby, pro-abortion people diminish the life of the baby by referencing its dependence upon the mother’s body.

The dependency argument suggests that a human who depends upon the body of its mother is using the mother’s body. Use implies the exercise of will. The baby did not come to live according to its own will. The will to produce the baby came from outside of the baby. Just as much as the will to produce the mother came from outside the mother. “Free will” is not a factor. Neither the will of the child nor the will of the mother produced the pregnancy. The development of a human being has occurred independent of the will of the baby and independent of the will of the mother -- equally. This is natural. If we can acknowledge that life happens apart from our will, and that natural processes often force our hand in things that we did not decide, in all kinds of instances, we can view the new life for what it is – human life. The new life deserves protection and care because the life of the child has the same value as mine. “My body; my choice” is a farcical statement. It is not the case for the child...and it is not the case for the mother...and it is not the case for the father. The very concept of choice falls well short of describing any part of bearing a child, and the baby’s body is not the mother’s body, and the mother’s body is not the baby’s body.

We see this truth in other kinds of dependency. A born baby depends upon its parents for nutritional support. The will of a parent, or the desires of a parent, must change in order to satisfy the needs of another human being. Many parents experience personal turmoil over this. They experience an emotional shift as they experience a shift in their priorities because another life depends on them. No one really knows what they are getting into when they become a parent. They find out along the way.

Once this is established, the risks of pregnancy, (though arguably less than abortion: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3560645/>) take on new and positive meaning. The risk accepted is a moral risk taken for the good of another human being who has no ulterior motive or darkly motivated will contrary to the mother. To refuse the risk would be immoral because it is the destruction of an innocent life that cannot defend itself.

Common Argument #2: If a woman is willing to have sex, she's knowingly taking the risk of getting pregnant, and should be responsible for her actions.

Your Response: You're asserting that giving birth is the "responsible" choice in the event of a pregnancy, but that's just your opinion. I'd argue that if a mother knows she won't be able to provide for her child, it's actually more responsible to have an abortion, and in doing so prevent a whole lot of undue suffering and misery.

But let's look at this argument a bit further. If you think getting an abortion is "avoiding responsibility," that implies that it's a woman's responsibility to bear a child if she chooses to have sex. That sounds suspiciously like you're dictating what a woman's role and purpose is, and a lot less like you're making an argument about the life of a child.

Common Reply: No, because women can practice safe sex and avoid getting pregnant. If she refuses to use contraception and gets pregnant as a result, that's her fault, and her responsibility.

Your Rebuttal: Not everyone has easy access to contraception, nor does everyone have a good enough sex education class to know how to use it or where to obtain it. But let's just suppose, for the sake of argument, that everyone had access to free contraception and knew how to use it correctly. Even then, no contraception is 100 percent effective. Presumably, you oppose abortions even in cases where contraception fails (and it does sometimes fail, even when used perfectly). If that's true, you're saying that, by merely choosing to have sex — with or without a condom — a woman becomes responsible for having a child. And that's a belief that has everything to do with judging a woman's behavior, and nothing to do with the value of life.

In our society and culture, we want to make sex antiseptic. We want sex without consequences, and we act like when consequences happen, it's not fair. When a man and a woman have sex, regardless of the precautions taken, pregnancy could happen. That is why pregnancy is not a product of the will of the baby and it is not the product of the will of the mother and it is not the product of the will of the father. Pregnancy happens, and the fetus is human. The only way to assure that a woman does not get pregnant is for a man and a woman to refrain from having sex. Unfettered sexuality and unfettered sex are not reasonable or safe. We must return to teaching our children that sexuality has an appropriate context within the family defined by marriage between a man and a woman. Men and women who have sex can receive responsibility for a child. Any person who puts this responsibility on the woman alone denies

that men have a moral obligation to care for a child resulting from their sexual act, and they also deny the responsibility of the community.

Regardless, the value of the baby is not diminished. When adults fail to fulfill their responsibility, the child should not suffer the consequences. The baby's value remains even when people act without thought or regard. The pro-life community does create and support many life-affirming organizations designed to help mothers and children. Seeking these organizations out is not hard. Thousands of women and men would step in to help a pregnant mother through the course of a pregnancy and beyond.

We must teach our children the proper place for sex and sexuality, and when mistakes happen we must love our children...even those not yet born.

Should we call unfettered sex harmful? Yes!

In the same breath, we must also affirm the humanity and value of both those who err in their actions and those who are conceived from the irresponsibility of others. An error in judgment does not diminish the value of life.

Common Argument #3: But I'm okay with abortions in cases of rape.

Your Response: Why only in those cases? Are the lives of children who were conceived by rape worth less than the lives of children who were willfully conceived?

If preserving the life of the child takes primacy over the desires of the mother — which is what you are saying if you oppose any legal abortions -- then it shouldn't matter how that life was conceived.

Anti-abortion people who hold a consistent view of abortion do understand that a child conceived from rape is still a human being worthy of protection and care. A person who believes that a child in the womb deserves protection would accept a law approving abortion in the case of rape and incest only out of expediency. Abortions resulting from rape and incest represent less than 1% of all abortions. To eliminate all but that one percent would represent a great improvement reflected in the number of lives saved.

Ultimately, one human life is not greater than a thousand. Each human life has infinite value. To persuade the nation to care for mothers who fell victim to rape or incest, and to care for a child of rape or incest, would certainly be better than to persuade a mother to kill her own child. More and more people do believe, and act on the belief, that a baby conceived in an act of violence deserves protection.

May we all so love a victim of rape that we treasure her and help her take care of her child in the way that only a mother can. An act of violence does not negate another act of violence. Additional violence only increases violence.

Common Argument #4: "If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down."

This argument is atypical of pro-life adherents. Only a fringe few express this argument. Pro-abortion people point to this unsubstantiated argument as proof that the anti-abortion movement rests in a hammock of unscientific propositions. The actual truth is that science has

proven the claims of the anti-abortion community that a baby in the womb is a human. As an indication of this truth, fewer and fewer people who approve of abortion make the argument that the fetus is not a human person. Even scientific writings and books and textbooks confirm the humanity and personhood of a fetus.

Pro-life people do not use quackery to support their propositions but do express themselves in legitimate, well thought out arguments. Often supporters of abortion will call pro-life people ignorant sighting their arguments. Ignorance is, in fact, no part of the conversation.

Common Argument #5: Adoption is a viable alternative to abortion.

Your Response: This implies that the only reason a woman would want to get an abortion is to avoid raising a child, and that isn't the case. Depending on the circumstances, the mere act of having a child in a hospital can cost between \$3,000 and \$37,000 in the United States. Giving birth is dangerous, too: In the United States, pregnancy complications are the sixth most common cause of death for women between the ages of 20 and 34. Even before birth, there are costs to pregnancy. In addition to the whole "carrying another human being around in your stomach for nine months" thing, many women, particularly teens, are shunned and shamed for their pregnancies — not only by friends, families, employers, and classmates, but also by advertisements in the subway. There's also the risk of violent retribution from abusive partners and parents. In short, there are a lot of reasons a woman might seek an abortion. Adoption doesn't address all of them.

The cost of pregnancy and birth do not need to fall on the birth mother who is giving the child up for adoption. Most adoptive parents will eagerly pay these expenses in order to add to their family. Many pregnancy clinics (pro-life) will also seek out ways to help a mother give birth. Many states allocate resources for this purpose. If you value the life of a baby, there is always a way to cover the medical costs.

There are risks for the mother associated with giving birth, and there are risks for the mother associated with abortion. To suggest that giving birth presents more opportunity for complication and even death than abortion does not bear out. The risk for the baby associated with abortion is extremely high. Most babies die...but not all of them. Think about that!

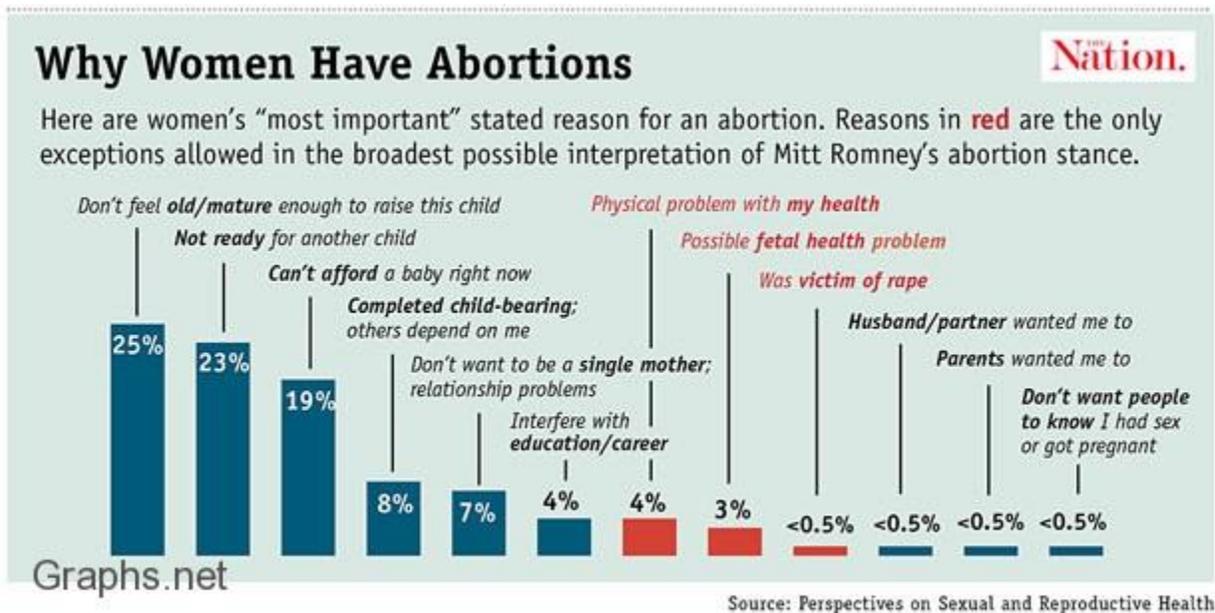
The possibility of violence does not justify the surety of violence. Possible violence can be avoided and even overcome. People in the community will help. The need for help must be communicated, but there is help available. We, in our communities, must stem the violence in our communities, and that includes the violence toward those who cannot lift a hand to help themselves.

Ultimately, none of these things really can negate the truth that one human life is not more important than another human life. Of course, when the mother's life is in danger because the pregnancy is not viable the mother's life should be saved. This, however, is not like a regular abortion. The value of the life of the baby is not pitted against the value of the life of the mother. Ultimately, opposition to violence against the most helpless people in our world is a trump card that cannot be overcome reasonably.

Common Argument #6: When abortion is legal, women just use it as a form of birth control.

Your Response: Do you have evidence of this? Considering that contraceptives are cheaper, easier, less painful, less time-consuming, less emotionally taxing, and more readily available than abortions, it seems odd to suggest that women who've already decided to use birth control would select abortion as their preferred method. It's more likely the opposite: Historical and contemporary data suggests that women will seek abortions regardless of whether or not they're legal, but that when birth control and contraceptives are more widely accessible; abortion rates go down.

It is true that people abort their baby as a way of preventing birth. Abortion is birth control. Abortion is not contraception. Contraception prevents conception. Abortion prevents birth. However, if we want to take this a step further, we can assert that most people choosing abortion do so for social or economic reasons. The parents of the baby have devised some reason from the circumstances of their lives that justify in their mind the killing of a baby. Clearly most people who have an abortion had sex even though they were not prepared to have a baby. The reason for this is mind boggling and bound in our cultural value of "free sex."



Common Argument #7: Abortions are dangerous.

Your Response: When performed by trained professionals, abortions are one of the safest procedures in medicine, with a death rate of less than .01 percent. The risk of dying while giving birth is roughly 13 times higher. Abortions performed by people without the requisite skills and training, however, are extremely unsafe.

An estimated 68,000 women die every year from back-alley abortions, which are generally most common when abortion is illegal and/or inaccessible. If you'd like to examine the health impact of banning abortion, consider Romania, which banned abortions in 1966. That policy remained in place for about 23 years, during which time over 9,000 women died from unsafe abortions, and countless others were permanently injured. That's around two women dying every day. When the policy was reversed, maternal mortality rate plummeted to one-eighth of what it was at its peak under the no-abortion policy.

Abortions and maternal death rates in Romania, 1965-2010. Image credit: BMJ Group

The negative health effects of prohibiting abortion don't end with the mothers. Romania's abortion ban sparked a nationwide orphan crisis, as roughly 150,000 unwanted newborns were placed in nightmarish state-run orphanages. Many of those orphans now suffer from severe mental and physical health problems, including reduced brain size, schizoaffective disorder, and sociopathy.

When abortion is illegal, it becomes exponentially more unsafe for both women and their children. You may not like the fact that women will seek abortions even when they're illegal, but it is undeniably a fact nonetheless.

The dangers of abortion for the mother are well documented. If you approach research with an open mind, it is easy to find the data that tells the truth. These dangers cover more than just death. The killing of innocent people always looks like a solution, but it always creates more problems than it solves.

Once we enter a discussion regarding abortion, we bring into consideration a new life. A baby has been made. This baby possesses its own body with its own characteristics. This baby is unique from any other person that has ever been made. Most abortions are fatal for the baby. Some babies survive and some of those suffer – some for a short time and some for a long time. Abortions are more dangerous than birth. This makes sense since abortion aims at death rather than life. Murder comes from darkness and always brings more darkness.

Additionally, birth statistics have shown that our medical advances have improved the safety of giving birth. These statistics are generally more accurate than statistic regarding abortion deaths because the medical personal have an interest in reporting deaths resulting from birth. Researching why a baby dies helps prevent deaths in the future. Abortion personnel, who are not always doctors and nurses, have no such interest. Botched abortions demonstrate a failure in the abortion industry and a report of this failure does not serve the interest of those participating in the abortion industry. Kermit Gosnell demonstrated this truth in how he operated his abortion facility.

<http://www.abortionclinics.ca/abortion-risks.shtml>

<https://www.abortionfacts.com/facts/11>

[https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175\(15\)30513-X/pdf](https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175(15)30513-X/pdf)

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/58-horrific-details-from-the-kermit-gosnell-trial-that-you-do-not-want-to-read>

Common Argument #8: What if Winston Churchill or Martin Luther King had been aborted?

Your Response: Are you saying abortion policy should be influenced by how good of a person a fetus ends up becoming? If that's the case, what if Joseph Stalin or Pol Pot had been aborted?

This argument is a twisted rendition of an old adage, “don’t throw the baby out with the bath water.” Just because some people are born, who perpetrate evil acts does not justify the killing of babies who have not acted harmfully toward society. We abhor all who destroy innocent human life. This is the whole point. Anti-abortion proponents are responding to the unjust taking of human life. Just like Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt acted to thwart the holocaust so antiabortion activists act to thwart the chilling aggression against the most innocent among us. We should lament the good that could have come from each murdered baby’s life, but even more, we should lament the loss of life!

Common Argument #9: Many women who get abortions regret their decision later on.

Your Response: This is a pretty common argument. As with shaming of teen moms, it pops up in subway ads...

This is a bad argument. Should the government ban people from doing things they sometimes regret? Think of everything you've ever regretted — not moving after college, dating the wrong person — and ask yourself if you wish there had been a law to prevent you from doing that thing. You probably don't, because you probably believe people should be able to choose their own paths in life regardless of whether they regret those choices later on. I agree, which is part of why I'm pro-choice.

People regret drunk driving, too. Sometimes a person regrets drunk driving because he wakes up in the morning with a hangover and a DWI ticket with a court summons. Yes...that is a regret that we might shrug our shoulders and proclaim, “Get over it. Do better next time.” We might say that until we get past the hangover, the ticket, and the summons and find out that in a drunken stupor this young man killed a woman and her two babies in a car accident that really wasn’t an accident.

Regretting a sexual encounter is different than regretting the fact that you killed another person.

Additionally, Millstein conflates two arguments inappropriately. When a pro-life person says that many women regret their decision to abort, this is an argument against abortion. Pro-

life people use this idea in their rhetoric to convince people to walk away from abortion. It is used to show the dangers of abortion in the life of a person.

The government is charged with the protection of life. Never does a government make a law because people have regrets. The government does not make laws for the interest of one individual's feelings, but for the good of the culture and society. Abortion is bad for the culture and society in which we live. Abortion promotes death. Abortion celebrates death. Abortion says that the death of one person is good for another person or a group of people. "Death makes things better." Violence against an innocent person becomes an acceptable pursuit in the culture. Government has an interest in fighting this perception. If death wins in our cultural conversation, that which truly defines our culture is destroyed, and ultimately so is our society. The wholesale acceptance of abortion in our culture and society foments violence and the attitudes that lead to violence. Life sustains our culture. When we support life, we support our culture and society.

When a pro-life person advocates for laws restricting abortion, that person is acting politically and for the benefit of society. When a pro-life person stands on a corner at an abortion clinic performing sidewalk counseling ...well...this is a very different activity.



Common Argument #10: Taxpayers shouldn't be forced to pay for things they find morally disagreeable.

Your Response: By that rationale, America also shouldn't have a military, since that's funded by taxes, and many taxpayers find American foreign policy morally disagreeable. Also, the Hyde Amendment prevents most public funds from going toward abortions. But that's a moot point because these are two separate arguments. Believing that abortion should be legal doesn't require you to also believe that taxpayer dollars should fund abortions.

Millstein's reflection that "believing in abortion should be legal doesn't require you to also believe that taxpayer dollars should fund abortions" is true. You can hold the two issues distinct. In fact, most anti-abortion people will address these as two distinct, but related issues

with different strategies. It is the desire of the pro-life community to erode the social, political, and economic basis of abortion. Pro-life people want our nation to end abortion through the process by which our republic is established. The same process by which we have established and defend our nation and identity. Pro-life people want abortion removed from the fabric of our society. Antiabortion advocates will address the abortion issue from different vantage points depending on the circumstance and context of the conversation. If a law must change, anti-abortion advocates will work in a legal arena. If the economic underpinning of abortion must be eroded, anti-abortion advocates will address the economic realities where they exist. If the heart of a man who caused an unplanned pregnancy leans toward death, the pro-life person will talk and share and be present in that man's life in whatever way possible.

Common Argument #11: What if your mother had aborted you?

Your Response: Well, if I'd never come into existence in the first place, I probably wouldn't have any strong feelings on the matter. Anyway, I love my mother very much and respect her right to make whatever decisions are right for her body and life.

Love is a dish that only life can serve.

Summary:

Life is not subject to our will. To suggest that it is, promotes a demonstratable lie. Sometimes morality and circumstance require a change of will.

Sexuality is never antiseptic. Sex always comes with responsibility for men, women, and the community.

A child conceived in a violent act (rape) is still human. Another act of violence against the child will not solve the problem of violence.

The pro-life, anti-abortion position is a well thought out and considered position. To dismiss or malign pro-life people as ignorant demeans the conversation. Thoughtless words on both sides of the debate do not define the debate.

The dangers of abortion are often hidden because the consequences of abortion may not express themselves until much later, and it is not in the interest of the abortion industry to report the dangers or the tragedies.

Adoption as a solution for an unwanted pregnancy serves the needs of the mother, the family, and society. Adoption is always a better option than abortion because adoption serves the needs of life. There are always solutions to the obstacles that might be in the way of adoption.

Abortion kills the innocent.

Government has the responsibility to protect life and promote a culture of life. A culture of death will destroy society by undermining the foundation of that society.

Antiabortion advocates approach the issue of life from many angles. The goal is not just to change the law, but to change hearts and mind, too.

Love and life go together. Without life, there is no love.